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The President's Daily Brief

June 10, 1976

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~~*Top Secret*~~ 25X1

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LEBANON: *Syria has agreed to accept Algerian and Libyan troops to "assist" in peace-keeping efforts in Lebanon, according to a Syrian government spokesman. Damascus seems determined not to bow, however, to Arab pressures for a dilution of Syria's military role in Lebanon.*

Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam finally arrived in Cairo yesterday for the Arab League meeting, and apparently was able to qualify further the League's resolution on a joint Arab peace-keeping force for Lebanon. According to the new ground rules, "all parties" involved in the dispute must agree on the size of the force.

Damascus' statement yesterday that it will accept Algerian and Libyan forces suggests that the Syrians intend to use their veto to block the League's earlier plan for a broad force composed of troops from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the Palestine Liberation Organization, in addition to Libya, Algeria, and Syria.

Khaddam apparently was also able to persuade his colleagues to include in the resolution a statement that the PLO must adhere to previous agreements with the Lebanese government that regulate Palestinian freedoms. These agreements prohibit the Palestinians from bearing arms outside the refugee camps and limit the size and type of weapons inside the camps.

Although the Syrians almost certainly recognize that the agreements cannot be fully implemented, reference to them in the resolution is a direct slap at the PLO and would seem to rule out Palestinian participation in any peace-keeping arrangements.

It is not clear that Syria intends to permit even the Algerian and

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Libyan contingents to enter Lebanon. Syria has announced that these troops are to arrive in Damascus--implying that Syria can thereby control their movements and their armament.

Three Libyan C-130 transport aircraft arrived in Damascus yesterday morning, possibly with the Libyan contingent on board. There is no indication that Algerian troops have begun to move.

Syria's agreement to share its role in Lebanon at least nominally with Algeria and Libya appears to be carefully calculated to minimize Arab interference without totally alienating other Arab states.

Syria is interested in obtaining financial assistance from Libya, and both Algeria and Libya are useful to Damascus in keeping Iraq and Egypt at bay.

Iraq has been trying since mid-May, through the offices of Algeria and Libya, to persuade Syria to permit Iraqi troops to enter Lebanon or Syria. Iraq was pointedly omitted from the Arab League's list of potential participants for a pan-Arab force for Lebanon. 25X1

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Although Syria has tacitly accepted the League's call for a cease-fire,

The Syrians have established a new large command post just inside the Syrian border opposite Al Masna, presumably to control military operations in Lebanon.

Fighting was heavy yesterday near the southern port city of Sidon, long a stronghold of radical Palestinian and Lebanese leftist

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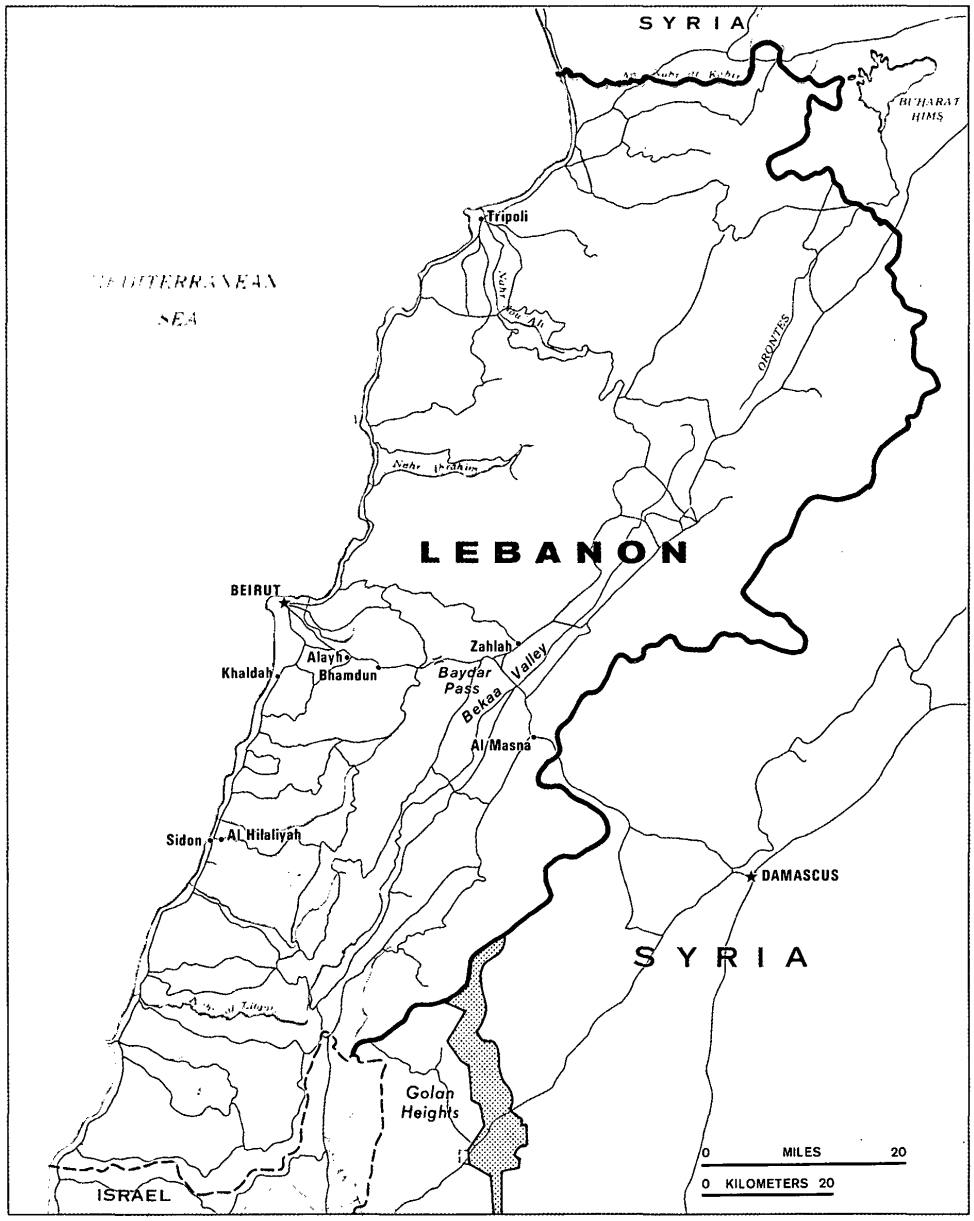

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groups. Some Syrian forces may have bypassed Sidon and moved north to Khaldah. Syrian and Saiqa troops have been fighting independent fedayeen and Lebanese leftists there for control of access roads into Beirut and the nearby international airport.

A Syrian armored brigade has been moving slowly toward Beirut on the main Damascus-Beirut highway. Its advance may have been halted near Alayh, approximately seven miles east of the capital.

Syrian forces reportedly are gradually establishing control in the Tripoli area, the predominantly Christian areas north of Zahlah, and in the Bekaa Valley.

In the east, they are disarming and in some cases arresting remnants of fedayeen and Lebanese Arab Army units that had been resisting Syrian occupation.

The Syrians are withdrawing some units of the 5,000-man Palestine Liberation Army, which is composed of Palestinians controlled by Damascus, from areas of heavy fighting. Syria hopes this move will forestall massive desertions fr 25X1 the force.

USSR-SYRIA: *The Soviets are voicing their dissatisfaction with Syrian actions in Lebanon but have given no sign that they plan to exert direct pressure on Damascus.*

A Tass statement issued yesterday questioned Syrian intentions in Lebanon. It stated that although Damascus had "time and again" claimed to be seeking only to stop the bloodshed, the fighting had intensified and was jeopardizing Palestinian interests.

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Far more blunt criticism was voiced by the senior Soviet military attache in Damascus in a conversation with his US counterpart Tuesday. The Soviet officer described his embassy as "quite confused and unhappy" over the commitment of major Syrian units in Lebanon because their apparent intention was the destruction of the Palestinian-leftist coalition.

The attache said the entry of regular Syrian forces into Lebanon last week was designed to embarrass Premier Kosygin. He complained that Damascus had not taken Moscow into its confidence and that no Soviet advisers were with the Syrian troops. He labeled the Syrian actions as dangerous and said they carried a considerable risk of failure.

The only prescription for a resolution of the crisis offered publicly by the Soviet Union was included in the Tass statement. It called for all sides to stop fighting immediately. Moscow presumably still hopes to find a way out of the Lebanese problem that does not disrupt its ties with either the Palestinians or Syrians.

* * *

MEDITERRANEAN: *Soviet naval exercises in the eastern Mediterranean apparently have ended. Meanwhile, France is gradually increasing its naval presence in the Mediterranean to underscore French political and economic interests there.*

Many of the large Soviet surface warships involved in the exercises have moved into the northern Aegean Sea, and some have returned to the Black Sea.

The impending return to the eastern Mediterranean of the US amphibious task force now near Spain--to join a US carrier group now there--undoubtedly will again trigger intense Soviet surveillance.

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The French aircraft carrier Foch left the Atlantic yesterday for its new home port at Toulon in the Mediterranean. Another French carrier also is based at Toulon. France is likely to add a guided missile cruiser and two frigates to its Mediterranean fleet later this year.

* * *

SPAIN: *The government is confident that it has the votes in the Cortes to pass the remainder of its reform program, even though it suffered a setback yesterday.*

The government withdrew from parliamentary consideration yesterday a bill to revise the penal code. The action was taken after news of the murder of the mayor of a Basque town so angered members of parliament that there was doubt the bill would pass.

The momentum for reform has not been seriously slowed. The government's hand was strengthened by King Juan Carlos' pronouncements supporting liberalization during his US visit last week. The government also now has the support of a Christian Democratic group that previously had been critical of the reform program.

The rightists, however, will still put up a stiff fight against creation of a bicameral legislature, establishment of a free trade union organization, and enactment of a new election law.

The left and center opposition parties are displeased that the new law on political parties does not legalize the Communist Party. They argue that the Communist Party should be allowed to compete openly because this would reveal its narrow base of support and would reduce the possibility of Communist infiltration of less extreme leftist parties.

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The government is adamant in refusing to legalize the Communists now but has let it be known that once a democratic system is well established, legalization of the Communist Party could be reconsidered.

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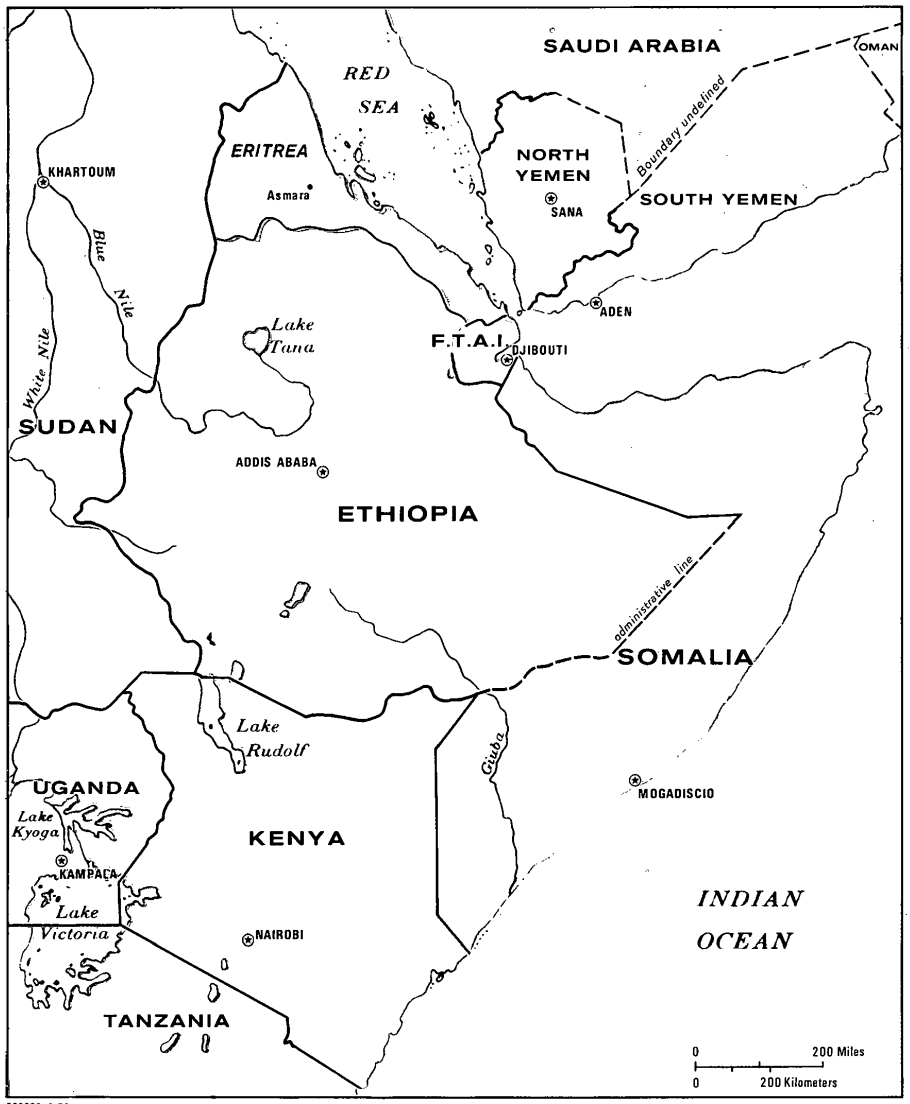
The Horn of Africa



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ETHIOPIA-SUDAN: *Peasant forces recruited to fight separatist guerrillas in Eritrea Province continue to gather, but they have not yet been ordered into the province.*

About 20,000 peasants are now camping on Eritrea's southern border, and up to another 30,000 reportedly are being assembled at various other points in Ethiopia.

The delay in starting military operations probably is due in part to shortages of arms, ammunition, and food for the peasants. These logistic problems--on top of insurgent attacks--have prompted large numbers of peasants to desert.

The ruling military council also may be holding up the peasants in order to allow more time for its latest effort to get peace negotiations started. Last month the council again offered some autonomy to the province, and a delegation led by a council member is now touring Arab capitals in an attempt to put pressure on rebel leaders to engage in peace talks.

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NOTES

The Cuban *convoy from* Angola *arrived in Mariel, the country's main military port, at midday yesterday apparently without fanfare.*

A ban on air traffic was put into effect as the convoy approached the port. We have not yet determined the mission of the convoy.

* * *

Angola *evidently has decided to reactivate its application for UN membership within the next few weeks, even if a Security Council veto seems likely.*

Angola's representative in New York says he has orders to bring the matter to a head.

When Angola first applied for membership on April 29, the Security Council deferred action because some of its members strongly opposed the application as long as Cuban troops remained in Angola. The Angolan government now argues that the Cuban troop presence is an internal matter and has no bearing on the question of UN membership.

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The "joint statement" that concluded Philippine *President Marcos' first state visit to the* USSR *indicates that the two governments found relatively little on which to agree.*

They did nevertheless establish25X1 diplomatic relations and sign a trade agreement.

The Soviets gave Mrs. Marcos prominent coverage. She apparently did not participate in the official round of talks

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